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## Contemporary Art Exhibition as a Type of the Special Art Environment

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*This article, through the example of the contemporary expositions, reveals the principles of creation of the special art environment in the exhibition space. The author notices that the creation of exposition spaces becomes a special form of design activity. These spaces are perceived by a person as contemporary art products, as object of understanding, research and study in the during the dialogue between a person, space and an exhibit. It is supposed that one of the basic conditions for creation of the special art space is interaction between the art space and an exhibit, where architectural space and an exhibit are in harmony and compositional unity, and act as a single organism. It is also mentioned that if there is good interaction between the space and an exhibit, a visitor would better expose into the art space. The article features the factor of inclusion of a visitor into the programme of the exhibition as a participant of an event, when the communication between a visitor and a designer is carried out through the language of objects and image of the space, created by a designer, an organizer or a curator with the help of the modern means of influence on a visitor. Besides, the author considers the exposition of the modern exhibition as a dialogue with the art, through which a person thinks of an object of art and receives emotional experience. The author concludes that finding himself in the contemporary art exhibition, which is considered to be a special art world, a visitor receives new knowledge and enlarges the limits of perception.*

*Keywords: type of the art environment, contemporary art exhibition, exposition space, object of the contemporary art, a person, space, an exhibit.*

### Point

Nowadays, an exhibition of contemporary art is aimed at the dialogue a person, a space and an exhibits. These values (a space, and an exhibit) are interrelated, they complete each other and help to understand the meaning of each other, they represent a single organism, so-called special artistic environment. It is possible to say that certain scenarios of visitors' behavior and ways of perceiving of the artistic environment are integrated or encoded into the exhibition

space. Let us suppose that communication takes place with the help of the artistic language, the language of communication between a visitor and an object of art. U. Lotman considers communication as a translation of the text from the language of my "I" into the language of your "you". "The very possibility of such a translation is determined by the fact that the codes of the participants of the communication, although not identical, but form intercrossing multitudes!". These multitudes, in our opinion,

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make dialogue and perception of the artistic environment possible.

Modern museums and temporary exhibitions combine means of influencing on the audience. Meditativeness gives way to active participation and dialogue with the art. This is what art spaces encourage and provoke. Being in art spaces, people lose the sense of time and chronology of the perception of art objects. The important aspect is an action in real time, here and now. With the development of exhibition activity, designers and architects strive to create a distinctive image of temporary exhibitions, changing and modifying attitudes of the *exhibition space* and *an exhibit* for each specific project situation. The researchers note that “stressing the importance of the imaginary origin of the modern exposition, the theory and practice of the artistic design still does not precisely define the means which are used to create the image of the exposition. In some cases, emphasis is placed on the importance of the specially created works of art, which are purposely included in the exposition, in the others – on the architectural solutions of the interior exhibition spaces of the museum<sup>2</sup>». What is the peculiarity of the artistic image of the exhibition space, by what means and for what purpose it is created by architects, designers, curators, and artists?

### Example

Let us try to answer this question using the example of the several well-known exhibition art spaces of the contemporary art, museums, galleries, cultural centers and works of art of the second half of the 20th century. With emerging of the new forms of art such as performance, video art or space installation, the attitude towards the exhibition space changes, it is included in the exhibition and requires competent organization. The inner space of a museum, a gallery or a cultural center may be connected with the environment (New National Gallery in Germany),

may be closed (the Guggenheim Museum, New York), may focus attention on itself (Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao; Cultural Centre of Georges Pompidou, Paris) or “disappear” (MoMA, New York). But in each of these cases it deserves special attention from the designers. Despite the statement of Mies van der Rohe that “architecture should be “a neutral frame “for the” life of the pieces of art “, when a person enters the building of the New National Gallery in Germany (1965-1968), he/she begins to feel aesthetic pleasure from its architectural design, a combination of the finishing materials, furniture, scales and ratios and the functional organization of the space. Every detail of the exhibition space is carefully thought over by the author. According to N.K. Soloviev, “his favorite thesis that “God is in the details” Mies realized in the interiors of the New National Gallery by a careful drawing of all the elements of architecture and equipment. Laconic wooden imposts and door frames of the several glass partitions of the ground floor lobby, due to the exact proportions and visual overlapping, look as a kind of space graphics<sup>3</sup>». In his exhibition spaces Mies van der Rohe aims for universality. With the advent of the new forms of art and new artistic languages, a new artistic environment that demanded a new approach to the expository site, was formed. Floor, ceiling, walls are not just places for exposition, but a three-dimensional structure, which has no definite functional and conceptual boundaries. This space expresses the variability of the perception of the objects of art and gives a visitor the freedom of interaction with the modern art. In this case, the meaning of the architectural exhibition space is much larger. For example, Renzo Piyano and Richard Rogers, the architects of the national center of arts and culture named after Georges Pompidou (1971-1977), noted: “... we are confident that a building can be changed not only in the plan, but also in section and vertical elevation. Freedom, that

allows people to act as they wish... Carcass (of this building) should give people the opportunity to operate freely inside and outside, change it and adapt it, in accordance with the technical and human needs<sup>4</sup>.” In this case, an important aspect is raised: a person in the exposition area is fully immersed in a specially created artistic environment, which accumulates all the modern audio-visual and interactive means of influence what allows to get complete impression from the exhibition.

This approach to the exhibition space as a special artistic environment and a product of contemporary art, is demonstrated in the new building of MoMA, built in 2004 upon the project by Yoshio Taniguchi. “The walks through the halls of the museum give an idea that visitors soar in otherworldly interlayers, cutting multilayered space that unfolds right in front of their eyes, it degrades and splits into a breathtaking architectural performance ... The columns, decorated by in delicate white plaster with thin gaps on the floor and the ceiling, very successfully create the impression that they support nothing, and, if necessary, may move as art installations<sup>5</sup>.”

«Often, the exhibition space itself becomes an exhibit or a symbol, as, for example, the Museum of Modern Art in Bilbao designed by Frank Gehry (1997). The architect has created the museum space “intended only for temporary exhibitions. The only permanent exhibit here is the building, which has become a recognizable brand of the museum network. ... The idea of the founders was correct: every year millions of people are willing to come to Bilbao to see the architectural wonder – metaphorically speaking, to look at the shell of emptiness. <sup>6</sup>»

The shell of emptiness is a metaphor that characterizes contemporary exhibition space as universal, open to the new kinds of contemporary art: visual, spatial or virtual. The opposite

situation, when the exhibit is transformed into the space is well is also interesting – well-known series of sculptures by Richard Serra «The Matter of Time<sup>7</sup>». In this case, the sculpture becomes three – dimensional compositions that are harmonized with the contexture of the museum in Bilbao, and it is difficult to say where the architecture of Gehry ends and the sculpture Serra begins. A visitor is placed in a harmonious interaction of space and an exhibit, where, interacting with each other, they form a new quality – a special environment. But the visitor is not passive, he interacts with the sculptures, responds to them and becomes a part of the action planned by the author: «the relationship between sculpture and the human body is explored by a visitor through scale, equilibrium, weight, and tension<sup>8</sup>.” An artist, along with the visitor reflects on the physical space and the nature of sculpture.

The space of contemporary exhibitions is “spatial graphic,” “fascinating architectural performance”, “art installation” and sculpture. Creation of the exhibition spaces becomes a special type of the project activity. Exhibition halls of the museums and galleries appear to person as the works of contemporary art, as an object of conceptualization, research and study.

Properly designed exhibition space reflects the time, the place and the person, and all these are exhibits. The, which The architect, critic and curator Vladimir Belogolovsky during his last visit to the MoMA asked the deputy director on curatorial activity of MoMA Peter Reed the obvious question: “Why do people, in your opinion, go to MoMA – because of the new architecture or to see the masterpieces exhibited here?” He received the following answer: “First of all, people come here to look at art. However, once in the museum, they are interested in the building itself. It is so harmonized with the art that many people do not notice it at all. ... It

is art that comes to the first place here, but the museum is planned in such an amazing way that the visitors always have the sense of curiosity.<sup>9»</sup> That is, in our opinion, one of the most important tasks: to provoke a visitor to the emotion, an action and plunge a visitor into the environment of an exposition. V. Glazychev describes perception of the contemporary visual art world as “the laboratory for the new means and methods of organization of the visual experience, organization of the integral visual system with the help of the specially created for a specific task or a specific situation means and methods. ... Creating special spatial systems, which include man as an integral element of the general structure, programmed and spontaneous movements of people are included as an organic element of these visual systems of expositions.<sup>10»</sup>

### Resume

Thus, communication of the artist and the viewer is happening by the language of objects and image of space, created by a designer, an organizer or a curator. If in the process of the dialogue, a person thinks about an object of art, gets emotions by heuristic guesses, intuitive understanding of an object of art and synchrony

with this object, then, as a consequence, a person gets new knowledge and expands the boundaries of perception.

We can see that if architectural space and an exhibit are harmonized and compositionally united elements they act like a single organism. The more there is interaction between the exhibition space and an object, the more a visitor is immersed into the artistic environment. Moreover, people in these spaces become objects of the contemporary art, which are included in the action and the game. Modern exposition is characterized by the participation of the audience in the programme of the exhibition. According to Marc-Olivier Wahler – the director of the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, Palais de Tokyo, the term “exhibition” gradually disappears and is replaced by the term “programme”. By participating in such a programme, a visitor, as an object, is placed into the artistic environment and interacts with it. Thus, we have a special object-spatial environment, immersing into which, a visitor of an exhibition of the contemporary art find him/herself in the new artistic reality, created according to the principles and compositional characteristics of the organization of an art exposition.

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<sup>2</sup> Музейная экспозиция [Museum exposition]. Архитектурно-художественное решение. – Статья, [Электронный ресурс]: Самарский областной историко-краеведческий музей им. П. В. Алабина – 2009, – Режим доступа: <http://www.alabin.ru/alabina/profi/courses2009/exposition/glava1/>

<sup>3</sup> Соловьев Н.К. [Soloviev N.K.] История современного интерьера / Соловьев Н.К. – М.: СВАРОГ и К, М., 2004. – 277 с.

<sup>4</sup> Джон Пайл [John Pile]. Дизайн интерьеров: 6000 лет истории. / Пайл, Дж. – М.: АСТ, 2007. – 412 с.

<sup>5</sup> Белоголовский В. [Belogolovsky V.] Идите и смотрите! МоМА – новый Музей Модернизма в Нью-Йорке. Building ARX №4, [Электронный ресурс]: Агентство архитектурных новостей – 11.12.2006, – Режим доступа: [http://www.archi.ru/foreign/news/news\\_present.html?nid=3109&fl=1&sl=1](http://www.archi.ru/foreign/news/news_present.html?nid=3109&fl=1&sl=1)

<sup>6</sup> Захарченко И.Н. [Zakharchenko I.N.] Художественный музей как храм современной культуры. [Электронный ресурс]: Sociologist, Warehouse – 2006, – Режим доступа: <http://sociologist.nm.ru/articles/museum.htm>

<sup>7</sup> «The Matter of Time».

<sup>8</sup> «The relationship between sculpture and the human body is explored through scale, equilibrium, weight, and tension». Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, [Электронный ресурс]: Presentations of the Permanent Collection, The Matter of Time. – 2011, – Режим доступа: [http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/secciones/programacion\\_artistica/nombre\\_exposicion\\_claves.php?idioma=en&id\\_exposicion=64](http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/secciones/programacion_artistica/nombre_exposicion_claves.php?idioma=en&id_exposicion=64)

<sup>9</sup> Белоголовский В. [Belogolovsky V.] Идите и смотрите! МоМА – новый Музей Модернизма в Нью-Йорке. Building ARX №4, [Электронный ресурс]: Агентство архитектурных новостей – 11.12.2006, – Режим доступа: [http://www.archi.ru/foreign/news/news\\_present.html?nid=3109&fl=1&sl=1](http://www.archi.ru/foreign/news/news_present.html?nid=3109&fl=1&sl=1)

<sup>10</sup> Глазыхев В. [V. Glazychev] Очерки по теории и практике дизайна на западе. «Дизайн и искусство». [Электронный ресурс]: RosDesign, – Режим доступа: <http://rosdesign.com/design/vglaz5.htm>

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## **Выставка современного искусства как тип особой художественной среды**

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*В данной статье, на примере современных экспозиций, раскрываются принципы создания особой художественной среды в пространстве выставки. Автор отмечает, что создание экспозиционных пространств, становится особым видом проектной деятельности. Эти пространства предстают перед человеком в качестве произведений современного искусства, как объект осмысления, исследования и изучения в процессе диалога человека, пространства и экспоната. Высказывается предположение, что одним из важных условий создания особой среды является взаимодействие пространства и экспоната, где архитектурное пространство и экспонат являются сгармонизированными элементами, находятся в композиционной целостности и действуют как единый организм. Также отмечается, что чем больше взаимодействие пространства и экспоната, тем сильнее погружение посетителя в художественную среду. В статье рассматривается фактор включения посетителя в программу выставки, как участника события, где коммуникация художника и зрителя происходит посредством языка предметов и образа пространства, созданного проектировщиком, организатором, куратором с помощью современных средств воздействия на посетителя. Также, экспозиция современной художественной выставки рассматривается автором как диалог с искусством, в котором человек размышляет об объекте искусства и получает эмоциональные переживания. В итоге, автор заключает, что посетитель получает новое знание, расширяет границы восприятия, попадая в особую художественную среду, которой является выставка современного искусства.*

*Ключевые слова: тип художественной среды, выставка современного искусства, экспозиционное пространство, объект современного искусства, человек, пространство, экспонат.*

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